

## A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

Today, as we approach the 21st century, the Department of Transportation (DOT) continues to play a critical role in assuring the economic growth and mobility our citizens are depending upon. With President Clinton's leadership, we are investing more in our infrastructure than at any time in history. The average annual level of the last 4 years is 22 *percent* higher than the previous 4 years. And the transportation industry has thrived--500,000 new transportation services jobs were created in the last 4 years.



Like other Federal departments and agencies, we at the DOT are changing the way we do business. We have changed our culture to one that views transportation system users, State and local governments, and the American people themselves as our real customers. Our goals and initiatives are aligned to customer needs, structured to look at results, not processes. We are doing more with less--over 10,000 fewer employees than 4 years ago--through streamlining and efficiencies. We are doing our part to link communities together with transportation systems that help Americans get to their jobs, and make it easier for them to travel around the nation and the world, to move goods faster and more efficiently, and to keep focus on our number one priority, *transportation safety*.

In terms of global competitiveness, the transportation sector is the healthiest it has been in decades. But we must do more, now, to renovate and modernize our existing infrastructure; use promising technical innovations such as passive tolling, advanced train control, traffic signal synchronization, and automated truck inspection; and, give future generations a transportation system that is even safer, more environmentally sound and more efficient. Government alone cannot meet all of our infrastructure investment needs. President Clinton has encouraged more private sector involvement. We are pleased with the progress we have made in our Partnership Through Investment program, which created new opportunities and innovative financing methods to supplement Federal funds with private funds and cut red tape. In July 1996, construction under the program had accelerated on over 74 highway projects in 31 States with a total value of over \$4.5 billion. These projects generated about \$1.2 billion in non-federal investment above what would have been available through conventional financing, and the improvements will produce economic benefits two to five years earlier. We look forward to expanding this program in FY 1997 and exploring other opportunities for innovative financing.

In the following pages, you will read about our responsibilities, programs, goals, major achievements and, for the first time, review a ***consolidated*** financial statement for FY 1996 on all of our funds and activities. On behalf of our employees, who are all working hard to make America's transportation system the best that it can be, I hope you will find our report useful and informative.

Rodney E. Slater